

Mayor Bower, INDOT attempt to make State Road 60 safer Salem Mayor David Bower meet with community leaders and members of the press on March 5 to announce that steps will be taken to make State Road 60 safer.

“Just how many crosses are enough?” Bower asked. “How many crosses will it take before we take action. We are losing our friends and families on State Road 60.”

Bower recalled realizing the problem when he first took office nearly 8 years ago, but admitted to feeling like his hands were tied by the jurisdiction of the the city limits.

“We thought it was a bad road, but we had no definitive information,” he said.

Bower eventually met with INDOT and they agreed to do a study on the road.

Tony McClellan, who is an INDOT deputy commissioner of highways out of the Seymour district was on hand to talk about the study and what changes will be made.

McClellan, who knows first hand the dangers of Highway 60, said there will be short-term steps that will happen this year to make the road safer.

“I am a Washington County native and I have driven that road many, many times and I have lost a friend or two on it,” he said. “This road has my special attention.”

McClellan said 60 continually comes up on a list INDOT gets as among the most dangerous in the state.

“Because of that we actually did a study,” he said. “We looked at what is causing the accidents and what type of accidents they are.”

State Road 60 is not the only road on INDOT’s radar, according to McClellan. He said State Road 7 between North Vernon and Columbus and State Road 111 from the Horseshoe Casino to Interstate 264 in New Albany are also dangerous.

“Each of those roads have pretty high accidents rates,” McClellan said. “They each have their own unique problems and there will be different approaches for each of those roads.”

One of the first things that is already being done in places on State Road 60 will help deal with the variation of speeds on the road.

McClellan said to place signs that tell drivers what road intersects.

An example he used was Shorts Corner and State Road 60 in Pekin.

“We will have a sign that tells you what road is at the approaching intersection and will help the person who is not familiar with the area to maintain a safe speed,” he said.

Another thing that will happen between August and October of this year is to place center-line rumble strips.

“We have found those to have a big impact on crossover accidents,” McClellan said. “. . . Somewhere between August and October you should see something happening.”

Another thing INDOT will do is install turnoffs that will allow law enforcement officers places to pull over traffic violators.

“Part of the problem along 60 is that law enforcement workers don’t have a good place to pull people over,” McClellan said. “We are going to try to put turnoffs in the right spots so they can pull people over and do it safely.”

He said those are steps that will be taken within the next year because they are the least expensive solutions.

“As we look into the future, we look at other things we might be able to do with the roadway,” McClellan said. “A good example is State Road 56 and that’s what we refer to as a super two. It has nice wide lanes and nice shoulders. That is a possibility with this road (State Road 60). We are going to see how these cheaper alternatives work first.

“We want to make this road safe!”

Bower, who has seen a number of projects completed during his term, such as the Salem Truck Route and the widening of Shelby St. He also was instrumental in helping to bring a Walmart to the community.

In his opinion all of the accomplishments that have been done over the past 10 years, would be second to making State Road 60 safer.

“I think this could be one of the best accomplishments of not only this administration, but the work of the city,” Bower said. “Our vision is is a safe road like the one we have from Salem to Scottsburg. That’s what we would like to see.”

Bower, who is a candidate for County Sheriff, challenged the media, public officials and the city’s department heads to keep this project on the minds of the folks at INDOT.